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The Spectator

Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

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Pres. Tepper reflects on his first year, higher education and campus social life

By Nicole Greenberg '25
& Anoushka Aswin '25
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Since arriving on the Hill in June 2024, President Steven Tepper eagerly participated in campus activities, launched the "What If?" initiative and interviewed former President Barack Obama. At the same time, his first year coincided with a period of reckoning for higher learning institutions, including attacks from a new presidential administration and political discourse over conflict in the Middle East.

Reflecting on his mindset a year ago, President Tepper described feeling the nerves a person might feel before a first date, questioning whether the dynamic will be a good fit. He first got the sense that he and Hamilton were well-suited on move-in day. President Tepper described "screaming at the top of my lungs and just getting lost in that…seeing the families come up the hill and just thinking this is amazing." Having a good fit, he said, opens "an opportunity for real authentic leadership." After a year on campus, Tepper determined that the date was "very successful," and feels like he and Hamilton are now going "pretty steady."

The best aspect of his presidency so far has been interacting with students, he said. President Tepper described dancing with HEAT during his inauguration, cheering on student-athletes during games, sharing meals with ASU, Chabad, Hillel and MSA, and spending Thanksgiving with students. President Tepper enjoyed these moments of getting to connect with students, "getting to get a feel for the rhythm and energy of Hamilton and see why students love Hamilton." He also appreciates that "students share freely" and he can "take critiques for how our institution could be better." President Tepper was impressed with the caliber of students taking his course, The Stories We Tell: How Colleges Build Identity, Loyalty, and Distinction, saying he has never experienced students "that were more engaged and serious about investigating, interrogating, exploring ideas."

Regarding his relationship to the student-body, President Tepper said that his "biggest responsibility as president is to make sure the institution maximizes the full range of growth possible for every student." This informs how he determines "where we can invest resources" and discovers "where there are barriers that, if we remove them, the amount that students could grow would be even greater." He said this also requires supporting faculty whose expertise, research and craft serves as "key drivers" of growth for students. Tepper mentioned "helping and supporting [faculty] to build even more powerful relationships with students, more powerful opportunities to catalyze their classes, more resources, more time to invest in that work."

While eager to discuss the positive moments he has had with students, President Tepper also acknowledged the challenges he has faced during his first year at Hamilton. The biggest challenge, he said, "at a place like Hamilton, people see the College as an extension of who they are," including students and faculty. Tepper said that "everybody who is affiliated with it wants it to show up exactly

PHOTO BY ZACK STANEK

President Tepper discusses the 2024 election with students on Martin's Way.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

In July, Marcela Rondon '27, Austin Cipriano '25 Shey Sanges '26 and Sara Soika took Tepper on a tour of key sustainability initiatives on campus.

NEWS

Interview with Bruce Mau

Aswin '25 discusses the class of 2025 commencement speaker's design vision. **page 7**

NEWS

McEwen's Kelly Alleges Mistreatment

Delaney '26 speaks with Kelly Hutchison on her exit from Hamilton. **page 3**

SPORTS

Oh Captain, My Captain

Wagner '28 interviews three senior captains who are leaving their teams. **page 12**

how they would show up in the world, they want it to do what they would do." So, when the College determines what it "does, what it says, how it shows up in the world," the challenge is that the institution cannot always reflect what every individual wants it to say or do "and when there's a gap, then people get frustrated," he explained.

While Tepper identified these discrepancies as a challenge, he said "the good thing about the gap is that if people give voice to the gap, then you're getting useful feedback on ways the institution might change." Tepper continued, "the challenge is that you don't want the dissatisfaction to get in the way of the learning."

Addressing some of the recent attacks on higher education, Tepper said, "especially with an external world that's also throwing things at us, distorting who we are, challenging some of our core values…there's a balance in being aware of the gaps, aware of the external forces—all those things that create an unsettledness—and staying focused on the core thing we're here to do."

President Tepper was one of more than 150 college and university leaders who signed the April 22 AAC&U letter, "A Call for Constructive Engagement," to protest the "unprecedented government overreach and political interference" toward higher education institutions. Reflecting on recent criticisms, Tepper shared "what I've come to realize in the last few weeks is that this entire conversation about our education…is missing student voices." He suggested that "we need to build a national campaign where students are speaking for themselves," answering questions like "do students feel silenced? Do students feel like they're experiencing attempts at indoctrination? Do they feel like they're not getting critical skills? Do they feel like if they disagree with a faculty member they can't pose a question?" Tepper argued that "it's a different story when you talk to students than what you hear pundits saying from the outside," sharing that he asked these questions to the recent Phi Beta Kappa students who "felt like they were independent thinkers."

Expanding beyond student voices to the larger question about the value of higher education, President Tepper said that Hamilton is "really good at telling the story to the true believers, and we're not so good at telling the story to those who are skeptical." He said there was a time when people—with or without diplomas—generally believed in college and might aspire to it for themselves or their families. "I think we've gotten to a place where there is not that feeling, and therefore the people who are not getting college diplomas, they're not interested in just our positive stories," like about sports teams, performing arts or museums. "They're probably interested in how we're going to help and I think that's a slightly different position for colleges to be in," he said. "That means we have to listen, we have to understand what our various communities need, we have to tell other people's stories and we have to particularly reach out to those that might have different political beliefs and engage them and try to win folks back."

PHOTO BY JOSH MCKEE

Tepper celebrates with the Men's Hockey team after their NESCAC final win.

Focusing on some of the changes he hopes to implement on campus, President Tepper shared his "what if" for student social life on campus—a source of frustration for many Hamilton students since COVID. Tepper asked, "what if the [Beinecke] village was one of the most social platforms ever conceived on a college campus?" He listed the five social spaces in the region, including the Little Pub, the Annex, the Events Barn, the Sadove Basement and a potential "dance space" in what used to be the mail center. He envisions a "social platform" that students could program and curate where every weekend students could "crawl from one to the other" and choose different types of music, fraternity or sorority events, a big event in the annex, game night or the pub. There are considerations of creating a responsible social culture, "the policies of who can drink and where should be enforced" and "the vision is that social life doesn't get organized around socioeconomics," Tepper said. "If we can get all that right and everybody agrees and we can invest the resources in making the village come alive, that would be amazing."

When asked if there were any plans to bring back the late-night Jitney, Tepper said "another part of aspirational design is how the town of Clinton can be more part of campus life, so that could mean we have a physical presence downtown—Colgate has more physical presence in their downtown." President Tepper mused on what the relationship between the College and Clinton could look like. "Do we have or are we operating a space downtown? Are we running the jitney late at night? We continue to be active in the farmers market and we volunteer…there should be a really powerful, mutually reinforcing, continuous flow of people and ideas between Clinton and the campus." He did provide the caveat that "it's not a college town" suggesting "there'll be people who live in Clinton who do not want to hear that impression."

Looking toward his future on the Hill, Tepper mentioned a few things he has yet to check off of his Hamilton bucket list: cross country skiing, performing another dance routine (with whichever organization asks him first), hiking in the Adirondacks, getting in a boat (not necessarily rowing it himself), eating at diner and maybe learning to juggle.

As President Tepper continues to get acclimated to Hamilton's community, he will search for balance between the individual wishes of community members and the direction of the institution as a whole.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY J. FORD

President Tepper performs with HEAT during his inauguration weekend.

May 8, 2025

McEwen employee leaves campus, alleges mistreatment from Parkhurst management

By Erin Delaney '26
NEWS CO-EDITOR

Kelly Hutchison, a cashier at McEwen Dining Hall who was known for her friendly greetings and conversations with students and faculty, recently left her job partly due to "manager mistreatment." She worked for Parkhurst Dining at Hamilton for a year and one month, but overall felt "dissatisfied."

"I wasn't happy with what I was doing workwise," she said. "[With] a couple of my coworkers and my bosses I felt like I was treated like a burden. When you go into work feeling like dirt most of the time because your managers don't give you the time of day or ignore your needs, it's just not a great feeling."

Her experience working for Parkhurst was not the only reason she felt she had to leave—there were personal reasons and "things going on at home" as well. However, she pointed to manager mistreatment as the main cause. "I was kind of getting over-scrutinized and micromanaged," she said.

Hutchison said that her physical health issues were overlooked and not taken seriously during her time with Parkhurst. "I have a lot of physical health issues. Standing is hard for me to do for long periods of time. The repeating cleaning motion would hurt my shoulders and my back. So I would be sitting a lot of times because I didn't want to strain my body any more than I had to. There would be a lot of days I was just going home in constant pain," she said.

"I had told them I have these problems. I can't stand for long periods of time and constantly cleaning was wearing out my body," Hutchison said. "When we had come back from summer break last year, I was cleaning all the time and I had gone to urgent care for inflammation in my shoulder from overuse."

Management told her she needed to provide a doctor's note for accommodation. While Hutchison says she completely understood the need for a note, she did not have a primary care doctor while in New York, and "[managers] wouldn't take that as an answer."

"I had a chiropractor and physical therapist, and both of them couldn't give me a doctor's note," she said. "And then I was told a week and a half before I left, that the real reason I didn't get the accommodation I asked for was because I 'talk too much.'"

Hutchison had to fight to be able to take Sundays off for religious reasons and to go home on religious holidays. While she "barely used PTO," on a day where she had two doctors appointments, she was told she still had to come in to work in between appointments even after requesting time off.

"I understand that managers have a lot on their plates and they have to think of everyone fairly. But considering that there were at least two people who had free time at certain hours of the day when I was doing something else, I feel like it could have been a very easy divide and conquer situation," she said.

"One of my managers, Chris—he was one of the evening managers and cooks—was very understanding of my situation," she said. However, their shifts did not often overlap.

"I'm trying to get out of food service because every time I've had a food service job I've had terrible treatment for health reasons," Hutchison said. "I'm trying to find a doctor who will give me an accommodation notice. But even undiagnosed health concerns or health issues should be taken seriously."

Even though Hutchison did not have positive experiences with several managers and coworkers at McEwen, she emphasized that interacting with students and faculty always made her day.

Kim Reese, a service attendant at McEwen who is Hutchison's coworker and friend, said that every morning while Hutchison would wipe the tables, she would talk to students.

"She actually left here with, I think, over 100 extra Instagram followers," Reese said. "She's by far my best friend. We hung out at work. We hung out outside of work. If she needed something, or I needed something, we were there for each other. We went to church together."

"If it wasn't for the students, I probably would have left at Christmas or spring break. I was so tired of the constant micromanaging and being in pain," Hutchison said.

"I always thought the students and the faculty and I got along really well. I thought we had really good conversations," Hutchison said. "There were a lot of kids who were like, you just made my day so much brighter because you were always greeting with a smile or always had something nice to say. When I left I had at least 60 kids tell me that."

John Crespo '26 called Hutchison one of his "good friends." He described a word game Hutchison played with students where they would provide her with a word, and she would try to find it in one of the 40 or 50 musicals she memorized by heart.

"Kelly knew everyone," Crespo said. "I would stand with Kelly at the front desk nearly everyday chatting, and was always amazed by how many people she knew by name. It was always 'Hi, Jasaiya,' 'I haven't seen you in a while, Billy,' and 'Siena, I love your new earrings!'"

PHOTO COURTESY OFJOHN CRESPO

Kelly Hutchison talks with Siena Rose Girouard '26 as she enters McEwen Dining Hall.

"Kelly was a lovely person. I enjoyed chatting with her whenever I bought coffee in McEwen," Peter Cannavò, Professor of Government, said. "She was always incredibly friendly. She seemed to want to make a go of it, living and working here, even though she wasn't from New York State, though she had relatives here. Her departure seemed sudden. One day when I showed up to get coffee, she told me it was her last day. At the time, I didn't get a clear sense of why she was leaving. She'll be missed!"

Reese told Crespo that after Hutchison left "things just don't feel the same anymore."

"I hope she finds better opportunities elsewhere, and I hope she finds that sense of fulfillment she's been looking for," Crespo said.

"Kelly was a valued member of our team, as all Parkhurst employees are," Lori Barone, General Manager of Parkhurst Dining at Hamilton, told *The Spectator*. "I know students enjoyed talking with her. We wish her the best in her future opportunities. We encourage all employees to do what is best for them, as Kelly was moving to be closer to her family."

Dear Hamilton Community,

Our first year at Hamilton was characterized by a difficult transition from COVID protocols to an environment where Hamilton students could return to "normalcy." Now, our final year is marked by an increasingly divisive political sphere that is inseparable from daily college life. Over the past four years, we've had the privilege to write about these moments, trying to make sense of them for ourselves and—we hope—for the campus as well.

We began at *The Spectator* as staff writers and copyeditors, relying on guidance from previous leaders to inform our writing, editing and eventually our leadership. We are grateful to those who came before us, and particularly grateful for those who have been with us along the way. We'd like to thank our fellow graduating seniors who have been instrumental in fostering student journalism at Hamilton. To Alex Kropaneva, Billy Marin, Alison Isko, Max Bratter, Carlisle West and Matthew Collins, we appreciate all of the time we spent together in the media suite and are grateful for all of your hard work. We are also glad to leave *The Spectator* in the capable hands of Gregoire Winston and Mia Antonini, whose enthusiasm for this publication is unmatched.

Our experience at *The Spectator* has transformed our relationship with the students, faculty, and administration that make up this campus. However, the Hamilton community is more than just something we've been been able to report on, it's also something we are truly lucky to have been a part of. For the stories, the memories, and the forgiveness of our typos, we could not be more grateful to this community.

Signing off,
Anoushka and Nicole

The Spectator

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Senior class graduation speaker announced

By Henry Meisner ’26
NEWS CO-EDITOR

Alexandra “Allie” Ennis ’25 has been selected as the class speaker for the graduating class of 2025. She was chosen from a group of the 12 highest-voted students in her year by a committee of faculty and her peers. She will speak on Sunday, May 25 as part of the Commencement ceremony.

Ennis is a math and sociology major alongside her roles as an Ariondack Adventure orientation leader, one of the head tutors at the QSR Center, a senior fellow for Community Outreach & Opportunity Project (COOP), a tour guide, co-chair of the senior gift committee and intramural basketball player. After she graduates, she plans to become a corps member for Teach for America.

“I’m so excited, and I’m so honored and touched that the class would elect me for this. And that, you know, I had the support of the committee to do this… I’m super honored by this, and really, really excited and humbled by the opportunity,” Ennis told *The Spectator*.

“My role, as I see it, is to leave the class with a message that hopefully resonates with everyone and can hopefully be a message that leaves people feeling good at the end of our four years here. And just, I really want to strike that balance between positivity and levity and also seriousness at this really pivotal point between college and adult life.”

When asked for details on what her speech may be like, Ennis said, “So like I said, a big part of it for me is just the chance to express gratitude and reflect on everything that I’ve loved about Hamilton. So I’m going to frame the speech beginning with that and sort of talk about how it felt coming here and what’s special about being here. And I’m also going to draw a lot of stories that my peers shared with me about what’s been special to them about Hamilton.”

Ennis’ selection came about after a long process of voting by both the class of ’25 and the speaker selection committee. She started her journey by being nominated by a peer for the role, and from there she received enough votes to become one of the 12 semifinalists to be selected by the committee.

Speaking on his experience as head of the speaker selection committee, Michael Ngaw ’25 said, “I’m really glad about how voting went because everyone who was nominated was great, but all those who ended up as semifinalists going through the interview process were wonderful. We had a two-hour-long discussion trying to figure out the six people out of those 12 semifinalists to go on to give potential speeches, and then when it was final speeches, again, sort of a two-hour debate.”

“The reason why Allie was such a great pick was because, I think, it was a very unifying speech, and it was a reminder of the camaraderie we had as a class,” Ngaw told *The Spectator*.

Giving her final remarks before the speech, Ennis said, “I feel really lucky that I’ve been able to connect with so many people across our class in many different, like, corners of our class. So I feel lucky to hopefully be in a position to [share] something that… resonates with everyone. And I just feel really lucky to be able to, once again, say thank you to my class.”

Inaugural “Common Ground Continued” event held with Hamilton Dean of Admissions

By Clemens Robinson ’28
STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, May 1, students, faculty and visitors gathered in the Events Barn for the inaugural Common Ground Continued event. The conversation served as a continuation of the most recent Common Ground discussion on Affirmative Action between Harvard Law Professor Annette Gordon-Reed and Manhattan Institute’s Heather Mac Donald. This Thursday, however, the guest was not an external speaker. Instead, it was Hamilton’s Dean of Admissions, Dr. John McLaughlin. Ty Seidule, Executive Director of Common Ground and a Visiting History Professor, hosted the session.

McLaughlin began the dialogue by offering his thoughts on the earlier Affirmative Action debate. He expressed his frustration at the misinformation and questionable interpretations of data by both guests, particularly Heather Mac Donald. McLaughlin drew on his education in data science and twenty years of experience to outline where the guests went wrong in their commentary.

Seidule then asked McLaughlin to explain the two frequently cited justifications for Affirmative Action: compensatory rationale and educational rationale. McLaughlin explained that compensatory rationale seeks to address past and present societal injustices by granting particular historically disadvantaged groups preferential treatment. He observed that this was a topic exhausted by the previous two speakers, despite its long-held unconstitutionality.

Alternatively, there is the educational rationale, which contends that diverse student bodies foster stronger communities and a more successful learning environment.

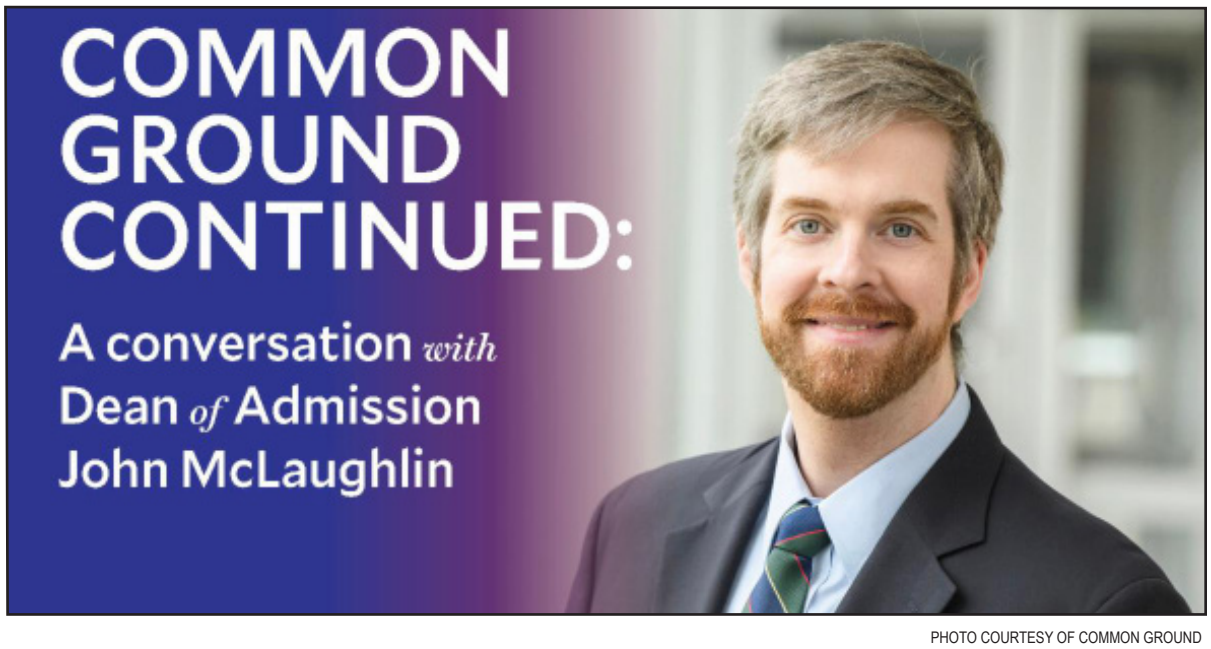

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMON GROUND

Dean of Admission John McLaughlin was first hired at Hamilton College in 2023 and has overseen the admission of the classes ’27 and ’28.

McLaughlin expressed frustration at the focus placed on the compensatory rationale by both Gordon-Reed and Mac Donald, stating he believed that educational rationale had far more merit.

McLaughlin continued to push back on some of the evidence presented by the speakers, particularly the "mismatch theory." Mismatch theory, McLaughlin told *The Spectator*, "suggests that some students struggle when put into environments considered to be too competitive relative to their preparation." In the previous discussion, this was a central component of Donald's argument against race-based affirmative action. She contended that affirmative action led to the rejection of well-qualified students, replaced by under-qualified applicants, who were more likely to struggle throughout their college careers.

McLaughlin cited a different theory, the "undermatch theory," which, according to McLaughlin, suggests, "some students opting to enroll in less competitive environments struggle because the opportunities and resources in those environments are not what they would find in a school that is appropriate for their preparation." In his conversation with *The Spectator*, McLaughlin emphasized that the two are not mutually exclusive despite often being placed in opposition to one another. McLaughlin then remarked that he "find-[s] the evidence on undermatching to be more convincing and compelling."

McLaughlin continued to offer his perspective on affirmative action as a whole, stating, "It's my belief that colleges and universities still have an interest in trying to bring in diverse classes and we want to think about how we can do that as best as we can without assigning any specific goal or target that we're working towards."

With the conversation coming to a close, Seidule opened the floor for public comments. Questions ranged from the impact of affirmative action on international students to how Hamilton was adjusting to the landmark judicial ruling. In response to an inquiry on the various scholarship programs on campus, such as Posse, QuestBridge and Opportunity Program, McLaughlin stressed that "none of these programs have race or ethnicity as an inclusion criteria." Although, he cautioned that such initiatives may be the next topic of court cases in the higher education arena.

This discussion was the inaugural Common Ground Continued event. Seidule hopes the program continues to expand and that this was the first of many of this variety. "Why not use our own campus expertise?" Seidule told *The Spectator*. Specifically regarding the event on Thursday, he continued by saying, "Here's a chance to talk through both the theory and practice and how it happens at Hamilton College." Seidule also expressed interest in eventually expanding the program beyond Common Ground topics.

Oral Communication Center hosts annual Three Minute Thesis competition for seniors

By Charlotte Post '27
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, May 3, the 2025 Three Minute Thesis competition took place in the Kirner-Johnson Bradford Auditorium, where seniors were challenged to present summaries of their projects in three minutes or less, even though a 20,000 word thesis can take up to two hours to present. Their summaries were tailored to a general audience, and the judging panel consisted of community members from Clinton and Utica. The judges evaluated how effectively students engaged with the audience and how strongly their presentation supported their arguments.

Participants had the chance to win cash prizes, with $1000 for first place, $750 for second place, $500 for third place, and $250 for the People's Choice Award. The People's Choice Award was given to the individual whose presentation received the most votes from in-person attendees.

The Three Minute Thesis competition was created by The University of Queensland. According to their website, the "Three Minute Thesis celebrates the exciting research conducted by Ph.D. students" and "cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills. The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience."

Anna Yankee '25 won first place for her environmental studies thesis, *Scaling Sustainability: Collaborative Approaches and Multidimensional Scopes of Responsibility at Starbucks and Forno Brisa*. She opened her presentation by asking, "What does sustainability look like? For some, it's a tropical rainforest. For others, a reusable coffee cup. For former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, it's business."

Yankee engaged the audience in a brief interactive exercise, asking them to imagine two businesses, one with 38,000 locations worldwide and another with just five locations in a single city. She then asked which seemed more sustainable. Most audience members chose the smaller business, a response she noted aligns with common assumptions in the social sciences.

Yankee then challenged this assumption, questioning whether smaller businesses are actually more ethical and environmentally responsible. Through case studies of Starbucks and Forno Brisa, a café based in Bologna, Yankee explored how each business approaches sustainability.

Her findings revealed that both businesses prioritize sustainability, but with differing strategies. For example, she stated that Starbucks tends to treat environmental, social and economic goals as separate categories, while Forno Brisa integrates them.

Yankee concluded her presentation by emphasizing that sustainability goes beyond simple black and white distinctions. "It's complex, collective and constantly evolving," she said.

Jennie Weisbrot '25 won second place for her economics thesis, *Pharma Takes a Dive: Comparing Patent Cliffs of Biologics and Small Molecules*. Weisbrot began her presentation by asking the audience if they prefer taking Advil or ibuprofen. She explained that Advil and ibuprofen are the same anti-inflammatory drug, except Advil is the brand name, while ibuprofen is the generic name that any manufacturer can use.

Weisbrot asserted that Advil is an example of a small molecule drug, which is chemically constructed and easy to copy once its patent expires, making it a simple "copy and paste operation." Weisbrot contrasted Advil with Humira, another anti-inflammatory drug, as an example of a biologic, which is made from living cells. She explained that since biologics don't have to reveal their exact cell line in patents, companies can't create an exact replica of the product.

Weisbrot argued that when a patent expires and generics enter the market, pharmaceutical companies often face a "patent cliff," a sharp drop in revenue due to competition. She went on to introduce her research question, "does the patent cliff for biologics vary from the one for small molecules?"

She hypothesized that the loss of sales for biologics is smaller compared to small molecules because biosimilars are harder to produce, leading to less competition and higher prices.

Weisbrot summarized the method of her thesis as collecting sales data for both biologics and small molecule drugs, then running statistical analyses to compare their revenue losses. She found evidence supporting her hypothesis that biologics experienced smaller drops in sales than small molecules. She indicated that "consumers are not leaving biologics for a cheaper alternative that may not even be there."

Weisbrot concluded by saying, "I'm truly sorry if this gives you a headache, but you could always take some ibuprofen."

The third-place winner was Abigail Lowder '25 for her neuroscience thesis, *Modeling Glioblastoma Angiogenesis in Drosophila melanogaster Larvae*. She began by asking, "What would you do if I told you that you only had 15 months left to live? That's the reality for anyone diagnosed with Glioblastoma brain cancer," a disease her own father faced. She emphasized the urgent need for more research to find a cure.

Lowder explained that Glioblastoma begins with a mutation in the brain that causes a tumor to grow and hijack nearby blood vessels. While the concept may sound simple, she pointed out we can't ethically give humans brain tumors, so we must rely on models to study the disease. Lowder described a procedure using two genetically modified fruit fly lines: one that targets glial cells and another that introduces a cancer-causing mutation. She explained that when bred together, their offspring develop brain tumors.

Lowder described her project's method, which compared healthy and cancerous fly brains. She found significant differences between the two groups, suggesting that her study was a first step in establishing a consistent model for studying Glioblastoma progression in flies.

Lowder concluded by expressing hope that her research will help make brain cancers less deadly so that she can "offer someone just a little bit more time with a loved one than [she] was offered with [her] dad."

After the competition, the audience, excluding the judges, voted for the People's Choice Award. Index cards were distributed for people to write their votes, which were then placed in a ballot box. While the results were close, the winner was clear.

Weisbrot received the People's Choice Award. In addition to her economics thesis, she presented her biology thesis, *Cloning Eyeless and Twin of Eyeless Enhancers*. She began by acknowledging that while fruit flies might seem unappealing when they get into your fruit, they play a crucial role in science, particularly in studying human gene regulation: the process of turning genes on and off depending on the function needed. She explained that although gene regulation must be timed precisely, we still do not fully understand how it works, which is what her thesis aimed to explore.

Weisbrot focused specifically on eye development and a vision disorder called Aniridia. She hypothesized that three genetic enhancers play key roles in regulating eye development.

As part of her method, Weisbrot created a recombinant plasmid, a tool designed to indicate whether gene regulation is functioning correctly. She explained that future students will insert this plasmid into fruit flies to test whether it properly regulates the genes eyeless and twin of eyeless.

Weisbrot concluded her speech by declaring, "I please urge you to clean your fruit bowls, but maybe also acknowledge that the mighty fruit fly has an important contribution to biology."

Hamilton is among the few undergraduate institutions in the U.S. that host the competition. The thesis competition is funded by the Ferguson Endowment.

Commencement speaker Bruce Mau on design

By Anoushka Aswin '25 &
Nicole Greenberg '25
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Bruce Mau, designer and activist, is the class of 2025 commencement speaker. Invited to teach at Arizona State University by President Tepper when he was a Dean at ASU, Mau commented on his longstanding relationship with Tepper. When invited to speak at Hamilton, Mau tried to answer the question, "what is the role of design in in our lives?"

Mau reflected on how his unique childhood growing up on a farm outside of a mining town in Canada led him to a career in design. Mau reminisced on how his house did not have running water, so he would often be tasked with filling up barrels from the local well. While the first time he ever left his town was when he went to college, Mau was eager to explore outside of his rural bubble. "Growing up, I thought, I'm going to get out of here and I'm going to do other things," Mau remarked. His life changed with an "extraordinary event on television called Expo 67."

Mau described how the Montreal world fair inspired him through the works of designers like Buckminster Fuller, creator of the Montreal Biosphere, an environmental museum. Watching the Expo was the "first kind of inkling that there was another world out there." Mau quickly decided he would pivot from studying technology to studying art.

Mau shared how he fell in love with design in high school, "and didn't want to do anything else after that." He attended college "for only a year and a half." Mau explained, "I just didn't know how to behave there. I didn't know how it worked. I frankly still don't."

Following his passions led to him learning a new language and receiving a job doing what he loved. However, Mau had doubts over whether his college experience was worthwhile. "For the longest time, up until really, like, two or three years ago, I thought that I failed university, but I realized recently that I just did it more quickly than others…I was on my way to an absolutely extraordinary adventure," said Mau. "I can't recommend a life of design highly enough because it is a life of learning," he continued.

Mau's passion for design permeates his Incomplete Manifesto for Growth, which consists of 43 mini-philosophies. When asked for the most important takeaways for Hamilton students, Mau expounded on three pieces of advice. "Power to the people," the final tenet on his list, is about recognizing that every person has influence. Mau attests "that most of us don't realize how powerful we are. We have the capacity to shape the world… We have the kind of mechanism that almost no other species has, that we can actually envision the future and share the vision."

Number 17 "_____" (intentionally left blank) is one of Mau's personal favorites, "because it it acknowledges what we don't know yet." He emphasizes the importance of leaving oneself open to possibility and new ideas.

Finally, Mau pulled from the MC24, his book on "principles for designing Massive Change in your life and work." "Work on what you love," Mau advised, "What you do is really critical, because you've got a whole life ahead of you and it's longer than ever before."

Mau noted that he hadn't had a chance to speak with Hamilton students yet, but he looks forward to coming to campus to speak to the student body. He will touch on themes of design, its intersection with higher education and its ability to enact change in the world.

Black Bag (2025): the spy who really loves his wife

by Maximo Bratter '25
A&E EDITOR

Black Bag (2025) is not a new thematic endeavor for director-writer-editor Steven Soderbergh, but it is indeed fresh. In Soderbergh's second cinematic entry of 2025 (after *Presence*), we meet George (Michael Fassbender) and Kathryn Woodhouse (Cate Blanchett), doppelgangers for each other in every attribute, from intelligence to nefariousness, save for appearance (even then, they match each other's suaveness).

As a result, when George finds out that there is a mole within his intelligence organization that has created a life-or-death situation revolving around Severus, missing code that can ignite a nuclear reaction, he naturally turns to his wife as a prime suspect. Who else would have the sort of insights that enables this thievery without a connection to a man responsible for it? Apparently a few others. George cordially invites his potential culprits over for a *Clue*-esque pseudo-interrogation dinner, including Freddie Smalls (Tom Burke), a co-worker who was passed over for a promotion in favor of George, his girlfriend Clarissa Dubose (Marisa Abela), Colonel James Stokes (Regé-Jean Page) and Dr. Zoe Vaughan (Naomie Harris), an in-house therapist of the intelligence agency that every character mentioned works for. We know no motives and no background from anyone, and nothing further is learned from the meal beyond the fact that everybody has their own motives and background that will certainly become clearer as the film progresses.

The film adds to a historical pantheon of spy thrillers that steep themselves in the real world with the added eccentricities of fiction that make them cinematically engaging. Reminiscent of films like *The Falcon and the Snowman* (1985) and *No Way Out* (1987), Soderbergh serves up a classic dosage of Cold War paranoia set in a modern context. Indirect references to Russian President Vladmir Putin and his unjust war against Ukraine provide *Black Bag* with a definitive urgency that history buffs and laymen can both appreciate.

But this only perforates the real tension at hand, which is whether it is George's forever faithful wife who is the double agent. A threat that feels like it has emotionally real teeth considering how sexy Soderbergh attempts to make monogamy, a rarity for a spy-thriller. Even though a character like George follows in the tradition of masculine and handsome espionage cinematic frontmen, he lacks the debauchery that one Daniel Craig's James Bond showcases in order to depict a raw willingness to do whatever is necessary to succeed. Instead, George is a technocratic animal who understands which levers to pull and who to exploit to get the information he wants. He might not have the stature to beat up a Bond bad guy, but he has the brains to outwit any of them, something that the characters around him in *Black Bag* find out the hard way.

Soderbergh accompanies his leading man with cinematography that puts us in his shoes. Focusing hard on faces, eyes and the minutiae of everyday occurrences gives us a lens into the meticulousness required of George to maintain his level of perfectionism, even if it comes at the cost of healthy relationships with everybody but his wife. *Black Bag*'s narrative is also stripped of any unnecessary frills; when someone gets got, they get got and when something interesting gets revealed early, it is referenced later for a resolution. This tightness is critical in concocting the all-encapsulating 90 minutes of inertia that the film exhibits and there is little room for beats to be missed.

When the film falls short though, it is for the same reasons that it succeeds. With such a linear and quick plot, there is little time for exposition or character and world-building. Placing the film in a real-world context speeds up the latter process but characters, including George and Kathryn, require archetypes rather than nuanced portraits to get the point across with time to spare for the rest of the film. We understand very quickly who everyone is, from George, the ultimate perfectionist and cold calculator, to Freddie, the slimy, but personable embodiment of envy and masculine insecurity. But this short rope leaves little to the imagination beyond what Soderbergh decides to give us. Fortunately, Soderbergh gives the audience more than enough to work with and enjoy.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLAUDETTE BARIUS/FOCUS

Steven Soderbergh is no rookie to making spy movies. His biggest box-office success is the *Oceans* franchise; a quadrilogy.

May 8, 2025

Hamtrek 2025: Hamilton students and faculty compete in annual triathlon

by Andrew Brennan '25
SPORTS EDITOR

On April 25, Hamtrek saw 209 participants compete in the campus' annual triathlon. At a time of year when stress is at an all time high, Hamtrek provides a way for students to take a break from academics for a little while as it brings them together to participate in a friendly competition of swimming, running and biking.

The event began in 2004, conceived by then student and Women's Soccer player Liz Roberts '06 and organized by former Campus Wellness coordinator Dave Thompson. Other than 2020 when COVID stopped it from happening, 2021 when it was held in a modified format due to COVID restrictions and in 2022 when the Campus Wellness coordinator position was vacant, the event has been held annually near the end of the spring semester ever since its conception.

Hamtrek is a sprint-distance triathlon (525 yard swim, 9 mile bike and 5K run) that takes place on campus, and invites participants to compete either as individuals or as members of a relay team. The swim was located in Bristol Pool, where participants swam in heats, with three swimmers per lane. The biking portion of the race was divided into two groups: one group utilized bikes brought by participants for themselves, racing around two Griffin Road loops starting from Dunham lot, while the other group raced on spin bikes provided by the school which had been moved from the fitness center to Dunham lot.

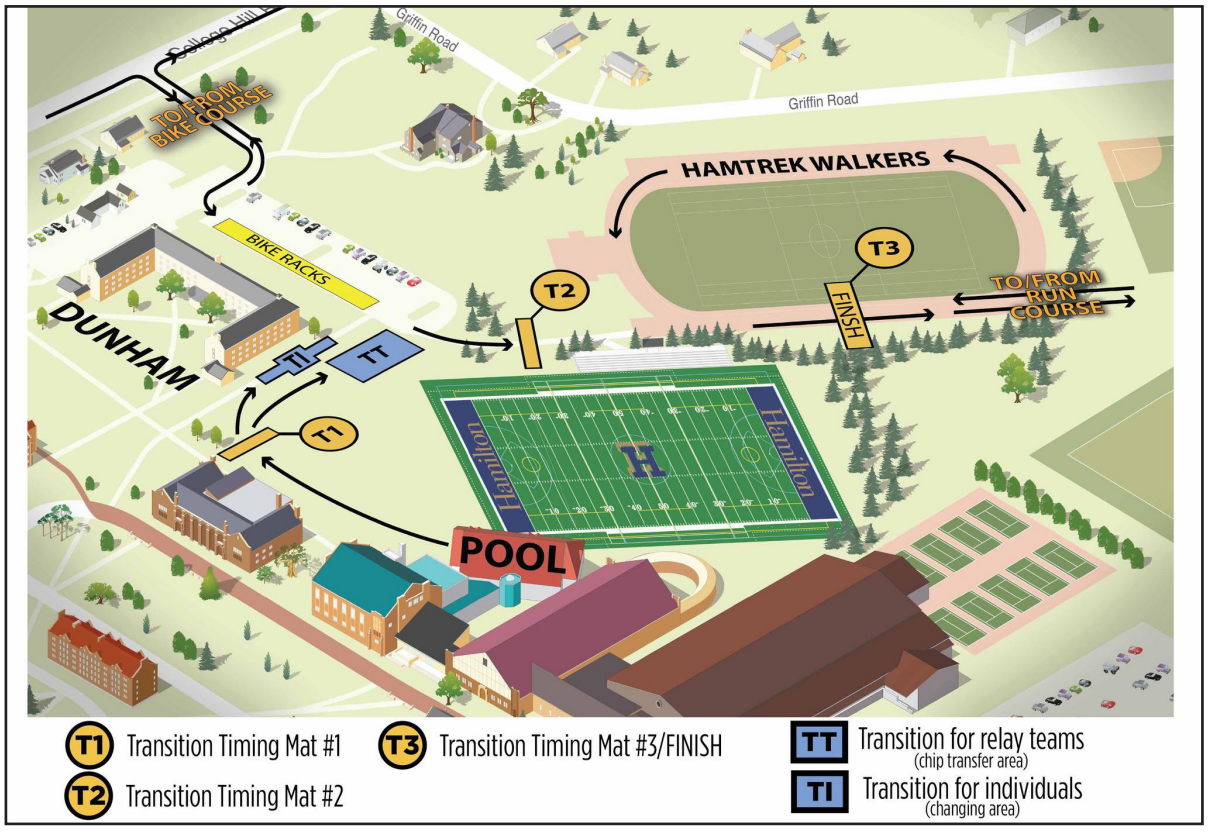

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Hamtrek course used in this year's event spanned multiple areas across campus.

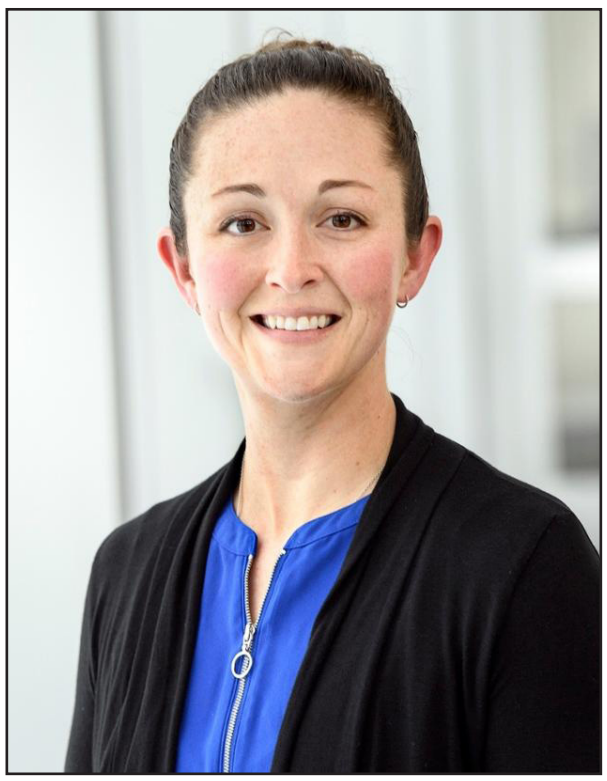

PHOTO COURTESY OF THAMILTON COLLEGE

Stephanie Kowell, Assistant Athletics Director for Fitness and Recreation, the coordinator of Hamtrek.

The second group formed the "spin division," which allowed participants to enter the race who were unable to acquire a bike. To keep the results fair, the spin division was ranked separately from the traditional triathlon division. Racers in the spin division were ranked by a composite score, which combines the rankings of participants' times in all three legs of the triathlon. Lastly, the running portion of the race took place on a different route than in recent years. Previously, the route used was the 5K trail ran in competitive cross country races, but it contained gruelling uphill portions and frequently confused Hamtrek participants. This year, a new route was devised that utilized existing trails along one continuous path, which not only decreased the route's steep uphill and downhill portions but also was less confusing in its path.

Compared to 2024, 2025's Hamtrek saw just one more participant, but saw a 29 percent increase in individual participants, meaning that less people decided to compete as members of relay teams than last year. Stephanie Kowell, Assistant Athletics Director for Fitness and Recreation and Blood Fitness Center Director, suggests this increase may be a reflection of more people feeling confident in their ability to do the full triathlon now that Hamtrek has become more familiar to people.

This year's race started off rocky, as weather threatened to jeopardize the start. However, after waiting for thirty minutes, the race began at 4:30 p.m., though heavy rain and winds lingered for a little while longer until they finally cleared up for good. At the end of the race, participants gathered around the track where the running route ended and ate food provided by campus dining services. All competitors and volunteers automatically received one raffle ticket, which participants could enter into one of ten different raffles each with prizes worth no less than $100. Winners were announced on May 1.

The success of Hamtrek was made possible in large part thanks to 45 volunteers, who helped count laps for swimmers and maintained order and safety, among other responsibilities. Campus support staff also helped tremendously, fulfilling various jobs necessary for the race. Furthermore, the student-led Hamtrek Committee helped make the competition happen, helping to lead event planning and organization, spreading student awareness about the event and helping with day-of preparations. Stephanie Kowell, the coordinator of Hamtrek, also had a huge hand in the continued success of Hamtrek, as she has organized campus support, managed the budget and made preparations for the final race for three straight years now.

Stephanie Kowell provided information on Hamtrek to The Spectator *for this article.*

2025 Hamtrek results roundup: the hundreds who conquered the Hill

by Andrew Brennan '25 & Caroline Cornely '26
SPORTS EDITORS

PHOTO COURTESY OF RASIKH SHAUKAT '25

The 2024-25 race had 209 total participants across 123 race entries. The events had 80 people compete indiviually and 43 relay teams enter.

Conventional Triathlon Division Results

Place	Name	No.	Time
1	Sam Pettengill	103	54:13
2	Will Strutton	146	59:17
3	Luke Engel	31	1:00:10
4	Will Neault	90	1:03:04
5	Luke Peplowski	100	1:03:40
6	Lil Gross	43	1:05:06
7	Marissa Duffy	28	1:05:20
8	David Levine	68	1:05:42
9	Alan Becker	6	1:06:10
10	Luke Ehrenfreund	30	1:06:13
11	Felix Halloran	50	1:06:52
12	Markos Lissarague	69	1:07:51
13	Peter Montesano	85	1:08:08
14	Sophira Pohl	108	1:08:56
15	Nathaniel Taft	148	1:09:55
16	Chris Brown	12	1:10:19
17	Cooper Xu	161	1:10:45
18	Tommy Kantrowitz	58	1:10:49
19	Samantha Glickman	37	1:10:51
20	Daniel Cho	22	1:10:57
21	Luca McAdams	166	1:11:31
22	Josh Smith	149	1:11:46
23	Pandelis Margaronis	78	1:11:52
23	Calvin Doherty	26	1:11:58
24	Kyle Miller	83	1:12:17
25	Kristin Vosswinkel	157	1:13:00
26	Erica Hills	54	1:13:00
27	Lucy Meola	81	1:13:21
28	Anna Peterson	102	1:14:26
29	Teghan Michelson	82	1:15:36
30	Lydon Kelley	60	1:15:37
31	Alya MacDonald	74	1:16:18
32	Sophie Berghammer	7	1:17:09
33	Zach Ransom	132	1:17:43
34	Jim Schreve	140	1:18:08
35	Maia Macek	75	1:18:13
36	Zach Orluk	95	1:18:20
37	Seth Tobin	150	1:18:23
38	Hunter Hoogkamp	55	1:18:38
39	Jackson Rassias	133	1:18:41
40	Teja Singh	142	1:18:48
41	Kevin Roback	136	1:20:15
42	Mathew Hake	45	1:20:26
43	Cate Ivin	57	1:20:32
44	Jake Cannistra	17	1:20:49
45	Julia Brantle	11	1:20:55
46	Lisa Ito-Bagshaw	56	1:20:58
47	Luke Struthers	145	1:21:02
48	Sebastian Hamming	52	1:21:26
49	Mike Gallary	25	1:22:57
50	Jake Lamalva	65	1:23:33
51	Lucinda Olson	94	1:24:55
52	Alex Wohnsen	160	1:25:59
53	Cristos Godis	39	1:26:41
54	Benjamin Labranche	64	1:27:02
55	Gainsley Korengold	62	1:27:02
56	Mary Powell	109	1:28:38
57	Gavin Liu	70	1:29:26
59	Georgia Rigby	135	1:35:48
60	William Siudzinski	143	---------

PHOTO COURTESY OF RASIKH SHAUKAT '25

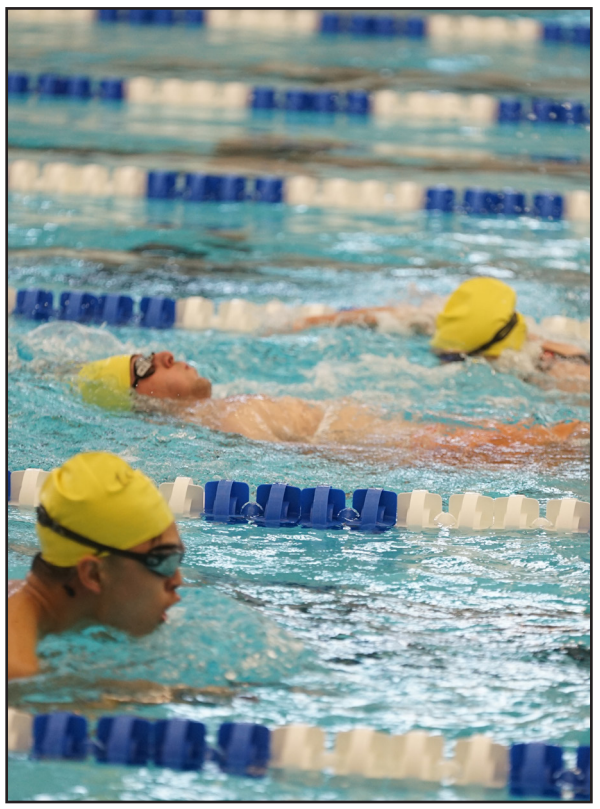

PHOTO COURTESY OF RASIKH SHAUKAT '25

Combined Relay Results

Rank	Name	No.	Time
1	Team Roche	137	52:45
2	Team Haberbusch	44	54:12
3	Team Oerlmans	92	56:08
4	Team Goodman	40	57:37
5	Team Carol	162	59:38
6	Team Chidley	20	59:46
7	Team Hall	49	59:47
8	Team Grimm	42	1:00:19
9	Team Burn	15	1:00:40
10	Team Nordquist	91	1:01:49
11	Team Bannigan	4	1:02:46
12	Team Fischer	34	1:03:18
13	Team Bulawka	14	1:04:00
14	Team Applebaum	2	1:05:14
15	Team Shaw	141	1:09:25
16	Team Van Wanroy	155	1:12:03
17	Team Peng	99	1:12:14
18	Team Olivo	93	1:13:27
19	Team Kusnerik	63	1:13:28
20	Team Mayer	79	1:13:45
21	Team Butorac	16	1:14:07
22	Team Ennis	32	1:14:32
23	Team Roth	138	1:14:40
24	Team Becker	5	1:15:10
25	Team Manfredonia	77	1:17:04
26	Team Lonnegren	71	1:18:02
27	Team Duserick	29	1:21:46
28	Team Glogoff	38	1:21:57

May 8, 2025

2025 Hamtrek results roundup: the hundreds who conquered the Hill

Spin Divison Results - Combined

Rank	Name
1	Brayden Malionek
2	Nakkab Jeffrey Cheng
3	Munoz Zubarik, Olivia
4	Katie Kilcoyne
5	Cole Williams
6	Hehir Zander Laidlaw
7	Meliya Soller
8	Hanna Vogt
9	Sydney Familo
10	Maddie Buck
11	Alexis Ortiz
12	Sarah Flood
13	Blomberg Abby Schwoebel
14	Lee Wilson Jiang
15	DeSanto Jennie Weisbrot
16	Ghosh Spencer Goldberg
17	Sophia Tosone
18	Miner Jackie Story
19	Owen Luft
20	Bailey Ella Scott
21	Nadel Lane Barsh
22	Charlotte Moulson
23	Adelstein Liza Beigel
24	Delaney Grace
25	Andrew Swanson
26	Hamill Dulany Bloom
27	Melissa Scala
28	Abby Douglass
29	Abby Berkowitz
30	Kelesoglu Olivia Connolly
31	Abby Weiss

PHOTO COURTESY OF RASIKH SHAUKAT '25

32	Valle Rafael Padua
33	Ella Crawford
34	Avery Trach
35	Padilla Sarah Slawson

Spin Divison Relay Results

Men's Relay
OVERALL SPIN RANK DIVISION TEAM

Rank	Swimmer Last Name	No.
1	Hehir Zander Laidlaw	6
2	Lee Wilson Jiang	14
3	Ghosh Spencer Goldberg	16
4	Valle Rafael Padua	32

Women's Relay
OVERALL SPIN RANK DIVISION TEAM

Rank	Swimmer Last Name	No.
1	Munoz Olivia Zubarik	3
2	Blomberg Abby Schwoebel	13
3	DeSanto Jennie Weisbrot	15
4	Nadel Lane Barsh	21
5	Adelstein Liza Beigel	23
6	Hamill Dulany Bloom	26
7	Kelesoglu Olivia Connolly	30

Co-ed Relay
OVERALL SPIN RANK DIVISION TEAM

Rank	Swimmer Last Name	No.
1	Nakkab Jeffrey Cheng	2
2	Miner Jackie Story	18
3	Bailey Ella Scott	20
4	Padilla Sarah Slawson	35

PHOTO COURTESY OF RASIKH SHAUKAT '25

Senior captains say goodbye to Hamilton

by Alex Wagner '28
SPORTS WRITER

Sarah Stonestreet '25

At Hamilton, Stonestreet played both varsity lacrosse and squash. Though Stonestreet was recruited for lacrosse, she also chose to join the squash team to stay connected to a sport she always enjoyed.

Stonestreet appreciated the contrast between squash and lacrosse, particularly the different ways they were played and the lessons they taught. Squash, a racket sport played one-on-one, emphasized individuality and taught her mental toughness, self-reliance and independence. In contrast, lacrosse—a fast-paced field sport—fostered teamwork, leadership and a sense of shared responsibility.

Reflecting on her squash experience, Stonestreet emphasized the intensity of practices. Matches in practice between her teammates determined the nine spots available for gameday, and Stonestreet often entered games as Hamilton's top-ranked player. Despite the competitive nature of practices, the squash team remained very close and supportive. Stonestreet explained how her coach and teammates emphasized sportsmanship, creating an environment where players pushed each other to improve while still celebrating each other's success. Stonestreet described squash as both a "social" and "life" sport and looks forward to continuing it recreationally in New York City after graduation.

Being a collegiate athlete is demanding on its own, but balancing two sports with Hamilton's academic rigor takes it to another level. Stonestreet managed both, excelling in the classroom while staying committed to both her teams. In fact, Stonestreet saw the bright side to her demanding workload, describing how her days were "more structured and more productive."

PHOTO COURTESY OFJOSH MCKEE

Sarah Stonestreet '25 played both lacrosse and squash while at Hamilton.

When asked about her favorite memory as a Hamilton athlete, Stonestreet didn't mention a specific game or win. "It was the relationships I built—ones that will last far beyond my time at Hamilton," she said.

Tommy Kantrowitz '25

Playing left back for the Men's Soccer team, Kantrowitz reflected on his time at Hamilton, describing the experience of being a student-athlete as "extremely rewarding."

First and foremost, he emphasized the evolving culture of the soccer team, which had strengthened significantly since his freshman year and fostered strong unity across all class years. Notably, Kantrowitz explained that the team embraced a non-hierarchical approach to leadership, where every player had a voice—not just the captains. He also highlighted the team's commitment to constructive feedback, saying the culture "taught you how to learn from others." This dynamic contributed to the team's cohesion and camaraderie. Their tight-knit bond was reflected in fun team rituals—one favorite tradition involved playing "Dog Days Are Over" by Florence & The Machine as the last song before the coaches entered the locker room.

Kantrowitz also spoke fondly about the relationships he built with his teammates, describing them as "built-in best friends" on and off the field. Kantrowitz later said that one of his favorite memories as a student-athlete were the locker room late nights. Typically, these were late nights after practices, when he and a few close teammates lingered in the locker room long after everyone else had gone—laughing, unwinding and making their way to the trainer, savoring those moments together.

When asked about his favorite memory on the field, not only did Kantrowitz remark on winning the NCAA Championship first-round match against Calvin University, but he also stated that he will never forget the emotional final game of his career—a second-round penalty shootout loss to Kenyon College. Kantrowitz highlighted the penalty-shootout, detailing that there were over 1000 fans in attendance and embracing his teammates in the shootout at midfield was magical. Regardless of the result, it was a rewarding ending to his prolific collegiate-career. At the end, he further mentioned that he was one of the players to take a penalty, of which he scored. "Bottom right every time," Kantrowitz said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOMMY KANTROWITZ '25

A favorite Hamilton memory for Tommy Kantrowitz '25 was winning a game in the NCAA tournament.

Brian Healy '25

Having played golf since he was young, Healy continued his passion at Hamilton. Reflecting on his four years with the team, he highlighted his deep love for the camaraderie it fostered.

Healy explained that being part of a smaller athletics team at Hamilton allowed him to truly get to know his teammates, bringing them closer together. Due to limited roster spots for golf tournaments, the team would determine who played based on weekly performance. When asked if this created a more tense atmosphere, Healy pointed out that it actually strengthened the bond among the team, especially as they improved over the years and practices became more competitive. Instead of competing against one another in a cut-throat manner, Healy explained that the golf team supported each other, with competition taking the form of playful remarks rather than rivalry.

Characterizing his experience as a student-athlete, Healy emphasized that being on the golf team taught him "time management and discipline," pushing him to stay academically productive during the season.

Ultimately, Healy shared that he will most remember his senior year, as this year's team was "built around a strong group of individuals dedicated to prioritizing the success of the team."